



County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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JOHN LEOPOLD
FIRST DISTRICT

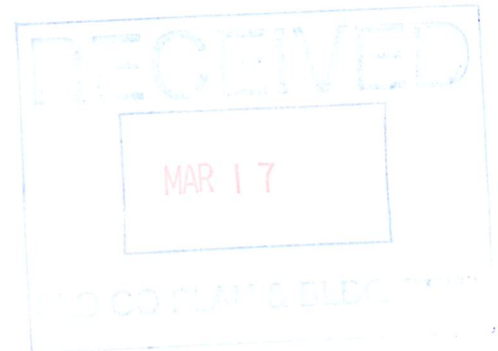
ZACH FRIEND
SECOND DISTRICT

RYAN COONERTY
THIRD DISTRICT

GREG CAPUT
FOURTH DISTRICT

BRUCE MCPHERSON
FIFTH DISTRICT

March 10, 2015



Chairperson and Members
San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission
County Government Center
1055 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

RE: OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED PHILLIPS 66
COMPANY RAIL SPUR EXTENSION PROJECT

Dear Members of the Commission:

I am writing at the direction of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors to express our opposition to the proposed Phillips 66 Company Rail Spur Extension Project.

Our community recognizes the environmental hazards and community risks associated with oil transportation and oil exploration techniques such as hydraulic fracturing. In our county, local voters expressed strongly that they did not want oil derricks off our coast, and the County supported legislation to regulate the type of container ships carrying oil along our coastline. Last year, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors also unanimously banned hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," in our county.

Members of our Board have been contacted by local residents and residents of other communities who are extremely concerned about the proposal by Phillips 66 to haul oil to a location in San Luis Obispo County by train. Phillips 66 wants to expand a train terminal in San Luis Obispo County to bring nearly three million gallons of toxic tar sands oil, each day, in mile-and-a-half long trains to their refinery in Nipomo. Phillips 66 admits that the plan will include transport of "significant and unavoidable" levels of toxic sulfur dioxide and cancer-causing chemicals. These are the heaviest trains on the tracks, running over our water supplies and through our towns across the state. While the trains won't run directly through our county, they will run over the Pajaro River, which is one of the most valuable water resources in our county.

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Transporting the crude oil proposed in this project by rail will involve as many as five trains per week with up to 80 tank cars, each carrying 26,000 - 28,000 gallons of crude oil (2.2 million gallons total) on their way to the San Luis Obispo County facility.

With the growing number of reports of hazards associated with oil tanker transfer by rail, communities along the proposed railway route are beginning to understand that we all have a stake in the Phillips 66 proposal. Just last month, a train carrying crude in West Virginia exploded, dumping over 70,000 barrels of oil onto the ground and into the nearby Kanawha River. This happened in spite of using new tanker cars built to withstand accidents better than older models. At least 12 derailments have occurred since early 2013, the most devastating in Lac-Megantic, Quebec, in July 2013, when a runaway train carrying Bakken crude derailed and set off an inferno that killed 47 people.

In Santa Cruz County, the Pajaro River flows through mountains, redwood forests, urban areas, and agricultural lands on its way to the Monterey Bay — the centerpiece of the nation's largest federally protected National Marine Sanctuary. The lower Pajaro River region includes working farms, businesses, and residential areas encompassing the City of Watsonville and parts of Santa Cruz and Monterey counties. Our county depends on the river for sustenance, recreation, and economic development. The hazards of a rail spill or explosion place the Pajaro River in danger, and the impacts of such a catastrophe could be widespread.

Accordingly, I am writing to express our Board's opposition to the proposed Phillips 66 Company Rail Spur Extension Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Caput", with a stylized flourish at the end.

GREG CAPUT, Chairman
Board of Supervisors

GC:ted

cc: San Benito Rising
Executive Director, Coastal Watershed Council

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COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
GOVERNMENTAL CENTER
701 OCEAN STREET
SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95060-4069

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